

## Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

### Tearthumb

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

Immediately before heading out into the field, I went over the list of gear – food, water, first aid kit, rubber boots. I had everything. Except the long-sleeved shirt. Not a big deal, I thought. I had the most important things.

And I did. But marching through the muck of a Southern Appalachian bog, the long-sleeve shirt would've been nice. There was the poison sumac, which didn't worry me too much because I've never had a reaction. More annoying was the sea of arrow-leafed tearthumb, *Persicaria sagittata*.

Tearthumb is an apt description as the plant's stems are lined with tiny, but very sharp teeth that cut your skin like a tiny saw when you brush your arm against it. The teeth are actually little hooks enabling it to climb over neighboring plants as it grows.

Most of us will never have occasion to stumble across this plant – it grows in swampy and marshy areas, places where hikers aren't prone to be bushwhacking. Here in the Southern Appalachians it's found in our bogs and other wetland areas.

To help you be certain you never miss stories of tangles with tearthumb or the latest in issues affecting Southern Appalachian wildlife, the Southern Appalachian Creature Features is now available as a podcast. You can now subscribe to episodes of the creature feature, either through iTunes or at [www.fws.gov/Asheville](http://www.fws.gov/Asheville), and automatically receive the latest episode.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.